



## CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

# MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Cattle Council welcomes Coalition's election announcement on livestock identification**

The Cattle Council of Australia believes that today's announcement by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Peter McGauran MP, to co-invest \$15 million in individual animal identification is a clear vote of confidence in the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

"The importance of NLIS, both to the Australian livestock industries and the wider national economy, cannot be overstated," said Cattle Council President, Mr Bill Bray.

"Australia's NLIS leads the world. Today's election announcement by the Coalition delivers a range of initiatives that will contribute toward unlocking the real potential of NLIS to expand the functionality of the database, create a mirror database, develop a sheep industry database as well as further education and training for producers," Mr Bray added.

Use of the NLIS has been mandatory in all States and Territories since July 2005. The power of the system to trace livestock in the event of a disease outbreak was again demonstrated during a simulation exercise, Cowcatcher 2, earlier this year. For the animals randomly selected in Cowcatcher 2, 99% were traced back to their property of birth.

"The beef industry, valued at around \$13 billion per annum, exports two thirds of its production; it represents 45% of all farm exports and 8% of total Australian merchandise exports. The cessation of these exports, a real possibility in the event of an animal disease outbreak, would be nothing short of catastrophic.

"The ability to rapidly track and trace animals in the event of an exotic disease outbreak is critical in containing the spread of disease.

"Cattle Council is committed to Australia's world-class NLIS and we will maintain our work with governments and industry to ensure that the system continues to deliver," Mr Bray concluded.

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